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93rd plenary meeting

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President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Agenda item 164

Normalization of the situation concerning South Africa

Letter dated 12 December 1995 from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/50/815)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.44/Rev.1)

The President: In connection with this item, the General Assembly has before it a draft resolution, contained in document A/50/L.44/Rev.1. The Assembly also has before it in document A/50/815 a letter dated 12 December 1995 from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee addressed to the President of the General Assembly, containing technical observations requested by the Assembly on the implementation of that draft resolution.

I call upon the representative of Algeria to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1.

Mr. Lamamra (Algeria): It is a special honour and privilege for me, as the representative of Algeria, to introduce draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1 on the agenda item "Normalization of the situation concerning South Africa". I do so on behalf of South Africa and of the 133 Member States — a significant number — whose names are listed in the document before you. I am glad to announce that Belize, Liechtenstein and Pakistan have joined the sponsors, thereby raising their number to 136.

The draft resolution is intended to normalize South Africa's situation at the United Nations. The draft resolution seeks to resolve finally the question of the outstanding contributions which have accumulated as a result of the unique history of the apartheid era.

The preambular part of the draft resolution contains the essential elements on which the decisions to be taken by the General Assembly are founded. These elements are, first, South Africa was invited to resume its participation in the work of the General Assembly on 23 June 1994 following the eradication of apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial and democratic South Africa; secondly, the General Assembly recognizes the unique and exceptional circumstances arising from apartheid, which led to South Africa's abnormal situation at the United Nations; thirdly, the General Assembly notes that the exceptional circumstances have already been recognized through the consensus adoption of resolution 48/258 A on 23 June 1994.

In the operative part of the draft resolution the General Assembly decides that, owing to the unique and exceptional circumstances arising from apartheid, South Africa should not pay the assessments for the period from 30 September 1974 to 23 June 1994. That is the period during which the apartheid regime refused to pay its contributions in retaliation against the political decision of the General Assembly to reject the credentials of the representatives of that regime.



The technical observations elaborated by the Fifth Committee in response to the request by the President of the General Assembly have been incorporated verbatim in the text of the draft resolution. These observations contain the most appropriate accountancy procedure to be followed in order to implement the present draft resolution. The General Assembly welcomes South Africa's decision to waive those surpluses which had, according to the Financial Regulations, accumulated during the period in question.

Finally, the General Assembly decides that the present draft resolution will under no circumstances set a precedent for the future. The case of South Africa is *sui generis*. There is no precedent in the history of the United Nations, nor can the draft resolution set a precedent, since it is based upon the unique and exceptional circumstances which arose during the apartheid era.

I urge all Member States to adopt the draft resolution by consensus, thus underlining the non-precedent-setting nature of the action to be taken today. Let this Assembly, by so doing, close the last chapter on the apartheid issue.

The President: I call upon the representative of Mexico on a point of clarification.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, I should like to ask the Secretariat, through you, when we are to receive the official document containing the financial implications of the decision we are about to take.

The President: I call upon the representative of the Secretariat, to provide the requested clarification.

Mr. Perfiliev (Director, General Assembly Affairs): The Secretariat wishes to confirm that the information furnished by the Secretariat to the Fifth Committee included estimates of the dollar amounts potentially attributable to individual Member States in respect of the surpluses to be reduced.

The Secretariat advised the Fifth Committee at that time that the calculation of an exact breakdown of each Member State's share would require considerable time to produce, because it entails the collection of detailed information on the periods to which those surpluses relate. This, in its turn, would involve a detailed review of over 30 General Assembly resolutions and related documentation, as well as the calculation of the share of each Member State for each period, using the different

scales of assessment in effect over a period of more than 20 years.

The Secretariat has indicated to the Fifth Committee that, in the light of the volume of work involved and the need to ensure accuracy, it will not be possible to complete this exercise before late January 1996.

The President: I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1 Malta has become a sponsor.

Mr. Ho (Singapore): Nineteen months ago a new South Africa resumed participation in the General Assembly. This was a historic landmark in the history of the United Nations and the culmination of 20 years of international struggle against the apartheid regime.

The twentieth century has unfortunately been no stranger to political evil. There have been all-too-many unconstitutional, unrepresentative and repressive regimes. But even the most totalitarian of them has usually felt it necessary to make at least token obeisance to virtue by professing to rule in the name of some lofty ideal, even if in practice it ignored or perverted the ideal.

The apartheid regime was unique because it felt no need to make even a token gesture to morality. It was blatant in its contempt for international opinion and moral principle by professing to rule for no other reason than racism. It was shameless in justifying itself solely through reference to a nakedly evil idea. In this respect, it was a uniquely evil regime.

The struggle against the apartheid regime is over. A constitutional Government genuinely representing the people of South Africa is in place. But the struggle to dismantle the consequences of apartheid is still with us and will be for many years to come. This draft resolution is a strong political signal of support to the constitutional Government of South Africa and another step in its continuing struggle against the consequences of apartheid.

The debt that South Africa accumulated between 30 September 1974 and 23 June 1994, a period when the apartheid regime was barred from representing South Africa in the United Nations, is not only a crippling burden for the new South African economy but a painful reminder of the past.

Singapore therefore supports the waiver of South Africa's arrears accrued between 30 September 1974 and

23 June 1994. We were happy to co-sponsor this draft resolution normalizing the situation concerning South Africa.

We hope that this draft resolution will bury the ghosts of this unhappy period in South Africa's membership of the United Nations and enable the new South Africa to make a new beginning in the work of this Organization. We hope that relief from this debt may also give a boost to the new South African economy as it faces the many complex problems involved in meeting the aspirations of the South African people.

But as the apartheid regime was uniquely evil, so also must the measures we take to remedy its effects be unique. At a time when the United Nations is in dire financial straits, it is clear that how we have chosen to treat South Africa's arrears is an extraordinary measure to deal with an extraordinary problem and should not under any circumstances be repeated.

We are pleased that the draft resolution states unambiguously in its final operative paragraph that the decision we take today is indeed an exception and shall under no circumstances be used by any other Member State as a precedent to justify the write-off of its arrears.

The defeat of the apartheid regime and the emancipation of the South African people was a resounding and inspiring victory for the United Nations. It vindicated the ideals of the United Nations Charter and the faith so many countries placed in them. We hope that all Member States will draw from this example the political will to abide by their Charter obligations and pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

Mr. Laclaustra (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The General Assembly will take action this morning on draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1, thus closing definitively a chapter of the history of our Organization by eliminating all remnants of the unjust apartheid regime.

The European Union, fully aware of the clear political significance of the decision to be adopted today by the General Assembly, would welcome the adoption by consensus of this draft resolution, which is sponsored by all the member States of the Union and a large number of other States Members of the United Nations.

The European Union considers that the draft resolution allows the Organization to achieve the political objective of finally normalizing the situation regarding South Africa, since apartheid has been eliminated and democratic and non-racial rule has been established. At the same time, since the technical observations adopted by consensus by the Fifth Committee have been incorporated in the text of the draft resolution, the best possible financial solution has been achieved.

In this respect, the European Union wishes to underline that the situation concerning South Africa is a unique and exceptional case, arising from the fact that because of the apartheid regime South Africa was excluded from participation in the work of the General Assembly. After the establishment of a democratic system, South Africa was invited to resume its participation in the work of the General Assembly through the adoption of resolution 48/258 A.

The European Union wishes to stress that the draft resolution about to be adopted by the General Assembly cannot be used as a precedent by other Member States, given that no situation could be similar to that involving the apartheid regime. Furthermore, the adoption of draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1 will mean that Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations will no longer be applicable to South Africa.

In this respect, the European Union believes that, for the sake of greater transparency in the implementation of the exception contemplated in Article 19 of the Charter, there is a need to establish, in a concrete and precise manner, an adequate procedure to be followed by all Member States that consider that their failure to pay is due to circumstances beyond their control.

The European Union wishes to take this opportunity to recall the importance of the decisions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, which have made a significant contribution to the end of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic system.

Allow me to highlight the financial effort made by all Member States in waiving their right to part of the budget surpluses that the Organization owes them — that is to say, \$53,332,105 from the regular budget and \$40,168,572 from peace-keeping-operation budgets — thus contributing to the normalization of the situation concerning South Africa.

It should be noted, as is mentioned in the draft resolution, that, before this action, the total surplus retained in the regular budget available as credits to Member States from the Organization amounts to \$122,238,000, while in the peace-keeping-operation budgets, the figure is almost \$173,400,000.

In this connection, and taking into account the serious financial situation of the Organization, the European Union is confident that South Africa will match the effort made by all States Members of the Organization with the decision to make voluntary contributions, in cash and in kind, to the programmes and activities of the United Nations.

I should like to conclude by stating that the European Union considers that a consensus on this draft resolution would be a clear example of the need for the common will of the Members of the Organization to manifest itself in order to resolve the financial crisis of the United Nations.

Ms. Ashipala-Musavyi (Namibia): The Namibian delegation, having presented, on behalf of South Africa and the Member States of the southern African region, the item entitled "Normalization of the situation concerning South Africa" at the first meeting of the General Committee at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, is extremely pleased that the United Nations has lived up to its commitments.

The United Nations was seized of the question of apartheid very early, at its inception. Then it was a question of racial segregation. The United Nations grew and its purpose expanded; it became an institution not only for safeguarding international peace and security, but equally for promoting and defending basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. At the other extreme, the policy of racial segregation in South Africa and Namibia developed into a policy legally sanctioning the inequality of human beings. The international community, through the United Nations, never wavered, vehemently and completely rejecting that obnoxious policy.

We in Namibia, being not only neighbours of South Africa but also having had the misfortune of being subjected to the same policy of apartheid, fully comprehend the basis and the rationale of the historic decision the General Assembly is about to take. Namibia therefore fully endorses the draft resolution.

The heinous policy of apartheid of the then-apartheid regime of South Africa is well-known and does not need

elaboration. Allow me, however, to mention one salient point: apartheid was decreed a crime against humanity in 1973 by this Assembly in resolution 3068 (XXVIII) of 30 November 1973. By the same resolution the Assembly adopted and opened for signature the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. That demonstrates the rejection by the international community of the policy of apartheid — a policy that attempted to create "ethnic purity" communities. Tragically, this was by force of State law. All this is now history, perhaps better forgotten.

It was from this perspective that we, the people of the United Nations, felt — and rightly so — proud of our achievements when a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa was finally invited to rejoin the community of nations. The moving triumphal statements we made in 1994, when South Africa was re-admitted into the United Nations, still ring loudly in our ears.

What the draft resolution demands from each Member State is a sacrifice worth making. In the history of mankind, moments of great disaster, either natural or as a result of the folly of man, international solidarity has always been the beacon of hope and confidence.

It is the irony of the human race that while being capable of producing monsters like Hitler and Verwoerd it is equally capable of galvanizing immeasurable generosity and solidarity. This is a case in point.

My delegation therefore urges the Assembly, in solidarity with the people of South Africa, to unanimously endorse the draft resolution. This is the least the international community could achieve.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan): My delegation supports the adoption of draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev. I, entitled "Normalization of the situation concerning South Africa", which approves the special arrangement excusing the Government of South Africa from the obligation of paying arrears for the period extending from 30 September 1974 through 23 June 1994.

This is indeed a unique arrangement in which all the other Member States have collectively shown their willingness to accommodate the request of the new Government of the Republic of South Africa and to bear the consequent financial burden. In so doing, they are acknowledging the fact that South Africa was barred from participating in the work of the United Nations by General Assembly resolution during the period in

question. The arrangement is also an expression of their wish to congratulate South Africa on the abolition of apartheid.

My delegation is gratified to see that, as a result of the technical evaluation of this matter in the Fifth Committee, the financial consequences of the decision to relieve South Africa of the obligation to pay its arrears are spelled out clearly in the draft resolution. The present draft resolution is thus a great improvement over the previous text, which was somewhat vague on this issue. This improvement was an important factor in Japan's decision not only to support, but also to co-sponsor the draft resolution.

The Japanese delegation would like to join many other delegations in heartily commending the Republic of South Africa for putting an end through peaceful and democratic means to its long history of racial confrontation. In particular, it expresses profound admiration for President Mandela, for his wisdom and perseverance in creating a stable, democratic and free society. It is our sincere hope that the Republic of South Africa will continue to progress on that course.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): Last year the international community witnessed the final overthrow of apartheid in South Africa. The elimination of apartheid and the establishment of democracy and majority rule in South Africa represented an important victory for the fundamental political values and principles on which the United Nations itself is built. This historic event was of great significance not only to South Africa and its people, but also to Africa as a whole and to the international community at large.

Once again we congratulate the people of South Africa and their political leaders on their success in bringing apartheid to an end. Also, the United Nations and the international community played an important role in the fight against the policy of apartheid, which rightly was considered "a crime against humanity" and

"a ... negation of the ... Charter of the United Nations". (resolution 3068 (XXVIII), first preambular paragraph)

Norway, for its part, was consistently in the front line of this fight. The Norwegian boycott of the apartheid regime was efficient and substantial. Norway's direct support for the anti-apartheid movement was also considerable, amounting over the years to more than \$200 million. This economic support is presently being

continued in the form of development assistance during the transition period, amounting to almost \$100 million over five years. The main objective of this assistance is to help the new South Africa to consolidate the democracy won through the elections in April last year and the local elections in November this year.

The exclusion of the South African apartheid regime from participation in the work of the United Nations General Assembly was an expression of the commitment by the international community to combat apartheid. The accumulation of South Africa's financial arrears was in turn a direct consequence of this step taken by the Members of the United Nations. It is therefore natural and logical that the international community should now take the necessary steps to ensure that the new South Africa is not burdened by these arrears, which in fact constitute financial costs of the fight against apartheid — a fight we considered our common responsibility.

By adopting the draft resolution before us, we will take those necessary steps. In the view of my Government, the draft resolution offers a fully satisfactory solution to the problem at hand. The solution is exceptional, as is the problem itself, being linked to a historical situation of a unique character. It is therefore also essential that the draft resolution, in paragraph 5, makes it unequivocally clear that under no circumstances will this decision constitute a precedent.

The decision that the General Assembly will take today to write off South Africa's financial arrears to the United Nations should be considered a final element of our common fight against apartheid. Allow me, Mr. President, to express Norway's deeply felt satisfaction that the new South Africa now holds its rightful place within the United Nations and that its relations with the international community, through the adoption of the draft resolution before us, will be fully normalized.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): We in Africa, particularly in its southern region, regard this as a historic occasion. To us, this draft resolution is an instrument which seeks to remind the General Assembly of the noble task and the responsibility that it undertook in 1974. As I speak, my delegation and, indeed, the entire nation of the Kingdom of Swaziland are praying that you, Mr. President, and the General Assembly will remember and be careful not to water down the good work done by the Assembly and its presidency many years ago. By the power of what they crafted then, a

situation that was seriously dehumanizing mankind in South Africa was successfully eliminated and subsequently uprooted.

In spirit, the draft resolution implores the members of the General Assembly to continue to honour its undertaking, which, indeed, we regard as a sacred assignment. A child was conceived and has now been born. For quite some time the Assembly prayed that at birth the child would be moving and would be seen to be a part of this family. What mother anywhere, having laboriously and painfully given birth, would then gather the family together and say, "Let us now devour the child." or "Let us now cripple the child."? What sailor anywhere, realizing that a fellow crew member was sinking in the ocean, would save him and then say, "Now that you are out of the terrible torrent, you must start to repay the debt of your adversaries."?

It is not, and will not be, a duty of the United Nations to punish South Africa — the very South Africa that we have been endeavouring to save; the very South Africa whose liberation has been the objective of our resolutions. Would it be fair to South Africa, or indeed to the United Nations, to craft amendments or attach strings or conditions to this draft resolution, which is very clear? My delegation says no. A political decision was taken in good faith, and that is what we must have again — a political decision, taken in good faith, to write off deeds that were never committed and debts that were never incurred by the present South Africa.

Since 1912 the Kingdom of Swaziland has worked hand in hand with those involved in the struggle in South Africa. We have learnt from our ancient Kings and Queens that they fully identified themselves with the liberation of the black people of South Africa. And today, we say that the black people of South Africa and the country's new Government should never be burdened by sins for which they are not responsible. We want to see South Africa move fast, without the burden of debts that it did not incur.

Mr. Owade (Kenya): Kenya is one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1, entitled "Normalization of the situation concerning South Africa". We co-sponsored this draft resolution being convinced that the circumstances surrounding the South African situation are unique and exceptional. South Africa was suspended from participation in the work of the General Assembly in 1974, due to the abominable and heinous policy of apartheid that then prevailed in that country. The Assembly played a leading role in the struggle against apartheid, culminating in the

multiracial and democratic elections in April 1994, upon which South Africa resumed its seat in the United Nations.

We reiterate therefore that we associate ourselves with the statement made very eloquently by the Permanent Representative of Algeria, on behalf of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution, which made it clear that the South African case is *sui generis* and cannot in any way set a precedent. We do not foresee a situation in which any country will be suspended from the work of this Assembly again for practising the worst form of racial discrimination.

The sacrifice being made by Member States by waiving their rights to credits that would otherwise be due to them is indeed a commendable gesture for a noble cause. As the new democratic and popularly elected Government of President Nelson Mandela embarks on its national reconstruction efforts the international community must continue to give South Africa full and unequivocal support. We therefore hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Jele (South Africa): The apartheid practices in South Africa and the moral outrage they provoked remained an agenda item of the General Assembly for 46 years. For a record 46 years, this Assembly laboured unceasingly to eradicate the scourge of apartheid. For that steadfast commitment, last year President Mandela stood before this Assembly to express, on behalf of the people of South Africa, his deepest gratitude.

The removal of the apartheid item from the agenda on 23 June last year and the invitation to South Africa to take its rightful place among the community of nations was met with great joy, relief and satisfaction. In accordance with the provisions of resolution 48/258 A, adopted by consensus on that date, the General Assembly explicitly recognized the "exceptional circumstances" pertaining to South Africa's situation at the United Nations. Yet on 23 June last year the removal of the apartheid item from the agenda did not settle fully and finally South Africa's past in this body. The legacy of the apartheid regime at the United Nations remained with us. This legacy arose from the unparalleled and unique nature of the system of apartheid.

The struggle against apartheid entailed many sacrifices and also produced unparalleled action by the United Nations. Never before has the General Assembly adopted so many resolutions on one single political issue.

Never before has the international community deliberated for so many years and succeeded in forging and maintaining consensus on a matter of such moral and political importance. But, more significantly, never before has the General Assembly taken a political decision to reject the credentials of a delegation. This decision not only demonstrated the General Assembly's abhorrence of the policies of that Government, but reinforced the Assembly's declaration of the unrepresentative nature and illegitimacy of the apartheid regime.

The repugnance towards the apartheid system compelled even the Security Council, at a time when cold-war paralysis inhibited consensus, to take unprecedented action by imposing, for the second time in United Nations history, a comprehensive, mandatory arms embargo under Chapter VII.

All these actions to isolate the apartheid regime were morally and politically justified. In retaliation, the apartheid regime intentionally withheld payment of its membership contributions. For 20 years these unpaid contributions accumulated. It is this legacy which the Assembly is addressing today. The draft resolution is founded upon the belief that this remaining legacy of apartheid should now be exorcised.

The resolution which we will adopt today reflects the recognition by the international community of the unique and exceptional circumstances which led to South Africa's abnormal situation at the United Nations. Due to these unique and exceptional circumstances, arising from the apartheid era, the draft resolution does not set a precedent for the future. Its adoption will enable my Government to normalize its situation in the United Nations and to fulfil our financial obligations fully. We have already met our commitments for 1994 and regular budget commitments for 1995. My Government is fully aware of the precarious financial situation currently facing the United Nations. I can therefore assure the Assembly that South Africa will not be found wanting in its support for and commitment to our Organization now and in the future.

Since we resumed our seat in the General Assembly my Government has made substantial voluntary contributions to peace-keeping operations in Africa. In late 1994 South Africa rendered cost-free essential air support services for the election process in Mozambique, working in tandem with the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ) to ensure the successful outcome of those elections. Recently South Africa contributed voluntarily to the peace-keeping operation in Angola by

providing, at short notice, essential equipment to expedite the establishment of quartering areas to the value of some \$8 million.

I am pleased to announce that I have received explicit instructions to inform the Assembly that my Government has decided, as a special gesture, to make a voluntary financial contribution to the United Nations. This special gesture is made in appreciation of the role of the United Nations in the struggle against apartheid and in recognition of the financial situation of the Organization. The voluntary contribution is made over and above South Africa's normal assessments and any other voluntary contributions similar to that which we have already made in Angola. The contribution will be specifically earmarked for peace-keeping operations in Africa.

The concrete details of this financial contribution will be communicated to the Secretary-General immediately. The necessary formalities have been concluded by my Government.

Mr. President, your personal assistance and patience in facilitating the consultations on the procedural aspects of this draft resolution are much appreciated.

I also wish to express my gratitude for the thorough examination and time-consuming deliberations which the members of the Fifth Committee, supported by the expertise of the Secretariat, undertook to elaborate the technical details contained in the draft resolution.

Finally, my Government's gratitude goes to all Member States for their support of this draft resolution. I would also like to address a special word of thanks to the sponsors, which took the important decision to commit themselves to the draft resolution.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their positions before action is taken on the draft resolution. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Tello (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation has no objection to the adoption without a vote of draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1. We understand the unique and exceptional circumstances that surround this question and that have led the General Assembly to consider as liquidated South Africa's assessments for the period from 30 September 1974 to 23 June 1994.

We recognize that for this purpose we, the Member States, will be waiving claims to reimbursement of the sum due us from the surpluses generated in previous budgetary periods.

The delegation of Mexico believes that the treatment we are today according South Africa is in keeping with a situation that is unique and unrepeatable.

Today more than ever, the financial situation of the Organization makes it imperative that Member countries comply fully and punctually with their obligation to pay the expenses of the Organization in the terms laid down in the Charter.

My delegation regrets that this draft resolution, which has financial implications has not been accompanied by any budget of expenditures prepared by the Secretary-General, as provided for in rule 153 of the provisional rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

At the same time, Mr. President, the delegation of Mexico is grateful for the information you have just given us to the effect that the publication of the official document detailing the specific sums waived by each Member State, in accordance with the provisions of the draft resolution, will be circulated at the end of next January.

Mr. Fagundes (Brazil): The reintegration of South Africa into the international community has been a very complex political process over the years. Brazil has always been supportive of efforts aimed at dismantling apartheid and at the advent of a multiracial society based on the lofty tenets of democracy.

Brazil is one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1, since we strongly believe that such an initiative represents the conclusion of a long process that has put behind us a past of injustice in favour of a future of brighter prospects for that sister country.

My delegation wishes to stress that, owing to the unique and exceptional circumstances pertaining to the resumption of South Africa's participation in the work of

the General Assembly, the draft resolution on which we are about to take action, as clearly stated in its text, shall under no circumstances be used or construed as a precedent.

The President: There are no other speakers in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1. I should like to announce that, since the introduction of the draft resolution, Andorra and Viet Nam have added their names to the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/50/L.44/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 50/83).

The President: I now call on the representative of Poland, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Jaremczuk (Poland): Poland welcomes with great satisfaction the adoption of this resolution by consensus, bearing in mind the exceptional and unique circumstances that have been taken into consideration. My country strongly supports the aspirations of the young democracy in the Republic of South Africa.

Although we join the consensus without any hesitation, I have been instructed to point out that due to the transformation processes under way in my country and the exceptionally high cost paid by my society, Poland will not soon be in a position to pay the additional expenses for the sake of the Organization which might be incurred by this resolution.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 164?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 42 (continued)

Question of Palestine

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/50/35)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/725)

Draft resolutions (A/50/L.47, A/50/L.48, A/50/L.49, A/50/L.50)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly concluded its debate on the agenda item "Question of Palestine" at its 75th meeting, on 30 November 1995.

In connection with this item, the Assembly has before it four draft resolutions.

I should like to draw members attention to a letter dated 11 December 1995 from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences, issued as document A/50/404/Add.2 and concerning draft resolution A/50/L.48.

I call on the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, His Excellency Mr. Ravan Farhadi of Afghanistan, to introduce draft resolutions A/50/L.47, A/50/L.48, A/50/L.49 and A/50/L.50.

Mr. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have the honour to introduce the four draft resolutions — A/50/L.47, A/50/L.48, A/50/L.49 and A/50/L.50 — on the question of Palestine. These draft resolutions have been drawn up in the light of recent progress in the peace process, which the Committee has welcomed with satisfaction and has supported. At the outset, allow me to announce that Guyana has joined as a sponsor of the four draft resolutions.

The first three draft resolutions — A/50/L.47, A/50/L.48 and A/50/L.49 — renew the mandates of the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and the Secretariat's Department of Public Information to continue their endeavours and programmes in their respective spheres of competence while taking

current developments into consideration. The corresponding financial provision has been made in the programme budget for 1996-97.

In draft resolution A/50/L.47, the Assembly welcomes the signing of the Declaration of Principles and the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 28 September 1995, and reaffirms that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy.

As members can see in the text, the General Assembly believes that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People can continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles and to mobilize international support and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period. The Assembly endorses the recommendations of the Committee contained in its report and requests the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or to the Security Council as appropriate. It also authorizes the Committee to continue to make every effort to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to make the adjustments in its programme of work it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session and thereafter. The Assembly also requests the Committee to continue to assist non-governmental organizations and to take the necessary steps to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work.

In draft resolution A/50/L.48, which deals with the work of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, the General Assembly confirms that the Division continues to make a useful and constructive contribution through the organization of seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations, as well as through its various informational activities, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources in accordance with existing mandates.

In draft resolution A/50/L.49, which deals with the work of the Department of Public Information, the General Assembly considers that the special information programme on the question of Palestine is very useful in raising the international community's awareness of the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East in general and requests the Department, acting in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue that programme with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

Draft resolution A/50/L.50 is entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". In the draft resolution, the General Assembly reaffirms the need to find a peaceful settlement of all aspects of the question of Palestine, which is at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Assembly expresses its full support for the peace process that began in Madrid and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements; expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East; and, finally, calls for the timely and scrupulous implementation of the agreements towards the negotiation of the final settlement.

The General Assembly stresses the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, and for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. It also stresses the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948; urges Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical period; emphasizes the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles, including the monitoring of the forthcoming Palestinian elections; and requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

The four draft resolutions I have just introduced were formulated with a firm resolve to contribute to the current peace process and to make real progress towards a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. A number of delegations, representing the view

of the majority of the members of the international community on the question of Palestine, have been consulted in the drafting of these texts.

Convinced that it is now necessary not only to maintain but also to reinforce our solidarity with the Palestinian people, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people, I invite all delegations present here to reaffirm their support for this objective and to adopt a constructive approach by voting in favour of the draft resolutions before the Assembly.

The President: The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/50/L.47 to A/50/L.50.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote before the vote. Before I call on the first speaker, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. DeCotiis (United States of America): My Government is unable to support the four draft resolutions that have been introduced under agenda item 42, "Question of Palestine".

Three draft resolutions, namely A/50/L.47, A/50/L.48 and A/50/L.49, are remnants of an earlier time, largely unchanged in their focus and purpose from years past. They have been overtaken by events on the ground in the Middle East. These draft resolutions promote institutions and activities whose approach to Middle East peace is both unbalanced and outdated. They do little to support the process of negotiation now under way directly between the parties concerned, nor do they reflect, except in perfunctory ways, the remarkable progress that has been achieved by the parties. In sum, these draft resolutions do not contribute to the growing spirit of reconciliation in the Middle East.

This alone would be sufficient cause for concern. In addition, these institutions and activities absorb about \$7 million worth of financial and human resources that could be better used in another way. The international community has clearly stated its support for assisting the Palestinians in building needed self-government, a socio-economic infrastructure and social services. We believe the General Assembly should consider carefully whether the activities supported by these draft resolutions represent the most effective use of United Nations resources in support of Palestinian needs. We believe

these resources would be better spent in support of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people. At a time when we are searching for ways to reform the United Nations for a role in the twenty-first century, these kinds of expenditures seem excessive to those who criticize the United Nations.

Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We urge that resources be transferred from these committees and activities to other United Nations organizations, such as the office of the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, that will carry out programmes directly benefiting Palestinians. Draft resolution A/50/L.50, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", speaks conclusively to issues that are, as we speak, under direct negotiation between parties in the region. As a sponsor of the Madrid peace process, my Government believes it is inappropriate and unhelpful for the General Assembly to take a position on issues that are now under direct negotiation by the parties in a process to which they have given their solemn agreement. At this important moment, we want to support that process of negotiation rather than focus on issues or statements that divide and polarize.

The United States supports the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. To our regret, the unbalanced drafts before us complicate the achievement of that objective. We will vote against these four draft resolutions and invite others to do the same.

Mr. Pérez-Desoy (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Life in the occupied territories is gradually being transformed. The peace process, following the signing of the historic Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, is now irreversible. The Israeli security forces have already withdrawn from Jenin, Tulkarm and Nablus, Kalkiliya, Bethlehem and Ramallah are expected to come under Palestinian control by the end of the month.

The European Union regrets that the mandates of the Departments in charge of the question of Palestine do not reflect adequately the positive developments which have taken place in the Middle East, although the last report of the Committee shows a positive state of mind towards the peace process. It is now time to open new paths for the

peaceful coexistence of Israelis and Palestinians, and to have the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat truly reflect the progress achieved in the peace process.

To this end, the European Union has made a number of concrete and constructive proposals. We regret that, once again this year, it has not been possible to achieve the reform we suggested. The European Union will therefore abstain on draft resolutions A/50/L.47 and A/50/L.48.

We hope that next year the need to adjust the mandates of these bodies to the new realities on the ground will be fully recognized.

Ms. Rubinstein (Israel): Since September 1993, Israel and the Arabs have taken historic steps forward in the peace process. Major developments included the signing by Israel and the PLO of the Declaration of Principles on 13 September 1993, and its subsequent agreements, the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area signed in Cairo on 4 May 1994; the agreement on the preparatory transfer of powers and responsibilities signed on 29 August 1994; and the Interim Agreement signed in Washington on 28 September 1995. On 14 September 1993, Israel and Jordan signed the Agreement on the Common Agenda which led to the subsequent Washington Declaration signed on 25 July 1994 and culminated in the signing of the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty on 26 October 1994. In addition, bilateral and multilateral negotiations continue, and we look forward to progress on all tracks of the peace process.

We had hoped that at its fiftieth session the General Assembly would respond to the new realities in the Middle East by changing and eliminating obsolete resolutions drafted at the height of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Regrettably, this has not happened. The draft resolutions before us do not reflect the new realities nor do they reflect our hopes for a better future.

Draft resolution A/50/L.47 endorses and authorizes the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Draft resolution A/50/L.48 does the same with regard to the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat. Israel has opposed the existence of these bodies since their inception. They have obstructed dialogue and

understanding through a one-sided and distorted portrayal of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Indeed, they stand in contradiction to the very principles upon which the peace process is based. In addition, these bodies expend valuable resources that should be devoted to more constructive activities, such as supporting social and economic development that would benefit Palestinians.

Draft resolution A/50/L.49 requests the Department of Public Information, among other things, to disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine. We believe that this, too, is a needless expenditure of valuable resources that could be put to better use.

Draft resolution A/50/L.50, while somewhat changed, remains essentially the same as the resolutions adopted in the past two years. Like previous resolutions, it attempts to predetermine the outcome of negotiations on issues relating to the permanent status, in contradiction to the Declaration of Principles. And, like the previous resolution, draft resolution A/50/L.50 is fraught with internal contradictions. On the one hand, it claims to support the peace process that began in Madrid. On the other hand, it attempts to undermine the fundamental principle of direct negotiations without preconditions upon which the Madrid process is based. We believe that Member States that claim to support the peace process have a responsibility to oppose this draft resolution, as it strikes at the essential principles on which the process is based.

Accordingly, Israel will vote against the draft resolutions under this agenda item. We encourage others who support the peace process to do the same.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): Speaking on this crucial issue, my delegation wishes to reiterate its longstanding policy of advocating peaceful dialogue. The Kingdom of Swaziland has for some years, in a number of forums, asserted that the way to lasting peace is to open doors and talk and resolve and agree.

It is our duty, therefore, to promote this principle of peaceful dialogue. Our duty is to herald the good efforts of both parties to take every possible measure to achieve a fruitful, lasting and peaceful situation in the Middle East. The State of Israel has opened the door to peaceful dialogue and the Palestinian leadership has clearly demonstrated a spirit of willingness to negotiate and talk. We have seen the leaders of both parties kissing and hugging one another. To my delegation, that is a clear sign

that peace is a necessary commodity in the Middle East, one that is needed by all partners.

Therefore, the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland appeals to this Assembly, as it has always done, to reject any draft resolution that seems to defeat the spirit of cordiality and willingness to achieve a peaceful and lasting settlement in the Middle East. In this spirit, my delegation would find it very difficult, if not impossible, to support any draft resolution that falls short of recognizing the good efforts of both parties concerned, as well as those of the United Nations itself, in trying to bring lasting peace to the Middle East.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/50/L.47 to A/50/L.50.

We turn first to draft resolution A/50/L.47, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates,

United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan

Draft resolution A/50/L.47 was adopted by 95 votes to 2, with 52 abstentions (resolution 50/84 A).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Guinea-Bissau and Saint Lucia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour; the delegation of Latvia had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution A/50/L.48, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia,

Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan

Draft resolution A/50/L.48 was adopted by 96 votes to 2, with 53 abstentions (resolution 50/84 B).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Guinea-Bissau and Saint Lucia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour; the delegation of Latvia had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: We turn next to draft resolution A/50/L.49, entitled "Department of Public Information of the Secretariat".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Grenada, Lesotho, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Russian Federation

Draft resolution A/50/L.49 was adopted by 142 votes to 2, with 7 abstentions (resolution 50/84 C).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Latvia and Saint Lucia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution A/50/L.50, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Abstaining:

Costa Rica, Marshall Islands, Russian Federation

Draft resolution A/50/L.50 was adopted by 143 votes to 3, with 3 abstentions (resolution 50/84 D).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Guinea-Bissau, Latvia and Saint Lucia informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Acting President: Before I call on the first speaker in explanation of vote, let me remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Samadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation would like to express its reservations on those parts of the resolutions adopted under agenda item 42 which might be construed as any recognition of Israel.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/50/L.50, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". Our favourable vote does not mean either that we support or that we oppose the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed by the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, to which reference is made in the ninth and tenth preambular paragraphs and in operative paragraph 2 of that text.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation voted in favour of draft resolutions A/50/L.47, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", A/50/L.48, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", A/50/L.49, entitled "Department of Public Information of the Secretariat", and A/50/L.50, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". We voted in favour because those four texts contain many elements in support of efforts that aim at meeting the demands of the Palestinian people.

However, I wish to put on record the reservations of my delegation with regard to the provisions in these resolutions that could be construed as recognition of so-called Israel or as welcoming or supporting the current peace process in the Middle East. That process does not provide a just and comprehensive and final solution for the problems in the region, with their core issue the question of Palestine. The question of Palestine can be resolved only through implementation of the many resolutions adopted by

the United Nations, and repeatedly reaffirmed by the international community as the best framework for a just and comprehensive solution that would meet the demands of the Palestinian people, particularly for the exercise of its right to return to its homeland, the establishment of a State of its own, and the exercise of self-determination.

The establishment in South Africa of a united, democratic, non-racial State exemplifies a solution that could be applied to Palestine through the establishment of a democratic State there, where Palestinian Arabs and Jews can live on an equal footing.

Mr. Valencia Rodríguez (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Ecuador abstained in the voting on draft resolutions A/50/L.47, L.48 and L.49 under agenda item 42, "Question of Palestine", and voted in favour of draft resolution A/50/L.50. My delegation considers it vital to support the Middle East peace process initiated at the Madrid conference in 1991 and to make the most effective possible contribution to strengthening the bilateral and multilateral negotiating machinery that is functioning now.

In this connection, my delegation welcomes the fact that crucial progress has been made in the peace process in the Middle East, and we support the parties that are endeavouring to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict. This must include full recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

My delegation vote in favour of draft resolution A/50/L.50, which was cast for the reasons I have given, reflected Ecuador's unswerving rejection of, and refusal to recognize, territorial occupation or annexation by force, as well as its firm conviction that a peaceful and negotiated settlement must be found to territorial disputes between States, in accordance with the principles of the Charter and the norms of international law.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote.

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988, I now call upon the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the Palestinian people, the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestine National Authority, I wish to extend thanks

to all the Member States that supported the four draft resolutions submitted under the agenda item "Question of Palestine". The General Assembly has just adopted these draft resolutions by overwhelming majorities. I should like to extend special thanks to the Chairman and members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their continued efforts in support of those rights in order that they may be fully attained and thereby provide the real guarantee that comprehensive, just and lasting peace will be built in the Middle East.

At the same time, we cannot but express regret over the positions taken by the delegations of the United States of America and Israel. Those are positions that appear to aim principally at setting aside international law and international legality and at forcing the Palestinian side to accept the results of illegal Israeli policies that have been subject to condemnation by the international community for many years. Those positions appear to be aimed also at subjecting the final settlement, that settlement which will be reached only after many years, to an imbalance of power that is in favour of Israel.

The Palestinian people, while engaged in the peace process, is armed only with its historic rights, with international legality and with international law. Any attempt to deprive one people even of those arms, is immoral and must be totally rejected. Furthermore, the claim by certain parties that they know best what the interests of the Palestinian people are, even better than the representatives of the Palestinian people, and that, thereby, they have the right to give advice on the best way of helping the Palestinian people, is also an unacceptable claim.

Positive change must take place in two directions and must be brought about by both parties, not by one party alone. In this connection, it appears logical that the required change is that which those who adopt isolated positions that are far removed from those of the international community must make in their positions in order for them to join the international community under the principles of the Charter and international law.

This is the third session of the General Assembly following the very important development of 1993, namely the mutual recognition and the signing of agreements between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. At all three sessions, the Assembly while expressing its absolute support for the ongoing peace process, has emphasized its principles stand, based on the Charter and international law, with regard to

the elements of the final settlement of the Palestinian question and to the necessity of enabling the Palestinian people to attain its inalienable rights. We wish to voice our gratitude to the international community for this stand, which has become an unchangeable and undisputed political reality. For this, we reiterate our thanks.

Lastly, I should like to extend our thanks to all those working in the Secretariat's Division for Palestinian Rights and the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information. In this connection, we would stress the need for full implementation of the relevant programmes approved by the General Assembly.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 42.

Agenda item 33 (continued)

International assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Nicaragua: aftermath of the war and natural disasters

Report of the Secretary General (A/50/535)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.18/Rev.1)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of this agenda item to take action on draft resolution A/50/L.18/Rev.1. Members will recall that the Assembly held its debate on this item at its 55th plenary meeting on 10 November 1995.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.18/Rev.1.

I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution the following countries have become co-sponsors: Haiti, Italy, Spain and Sweden.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.18/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/50/L.18/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 50/85).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 33?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 38 (continued)

The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/548)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.53)

The Acting President: The General Assembly will now resume its consideration of this agenda item to take action on draft resolution A/50/L.53.

Members will recall that the Assembly held its debate on the item at its 88th plenary meeting, on 11 December 1995.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and of the group of countries Friends of the Secretary-General for Haiti, I have the honour to submit to the General Assembly the following revisions to the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.53, entitled "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti".

The first revision, to the fifth preambular paragraph, is to delete the words "and non-violent" at the beginning of the second line.

Secondly, in operative paragraph 2, in the first line, the words "at the appropriate time" should be replaced by the words

"upon consideration of a recommendation by the Secretary-General".

In the last line, after "7 February 1996", the words "in an appropriate resolution" should be added. The whole paragraph will then read:

"Stands ready upon consideration of a recommendation by the Secretary-General and at the request of the Haitian authorities to extend the United Nations component of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti beyond 7 February 1996 in an appropriate resolution".

Thirdly, in operative paragraph 5, the words "justice and economic prosperity" should be added at the end of the paragraph after "lasting democracy".

Finally, in operative paragraph 8, in the second line, the word "increase" should be replaced by "continue".

It is the hope of the co-sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.53 that the General Assembly will be able to adopt this text by consensus.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.53 as orally revised. I should like to announce that the following countries have become co-sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.53 as orally revised: Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Uruguay.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/50/L.53 as orally revised?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 50/86).

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 38.

Postponement of date of recess

The Acting President: I should like to draw the attention of members to a matter relating to the date of recess.

Members will recall that at the 3rd plenary meeting, on 22 September 1995, the General Assembly decided that the fiftieth session should recess on 19 December 1995 and close on 16 September 1996.

However, the Assembly will not be able to conclude its work on Tuesday, 19 December 1995. I should like, therefore, to propose to the Assembly that it postpone its date of recess until 22 December 1995.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to this proposal?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that on Tuesday, 19 December, in the afternoon, the General Assembly will consider agenda item 20 (d), "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan", together with agenda item 54, "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security".

I should like to inform members that, in connection with agenda item 35, "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte", originally scheduled to be considered on Monday, 18 December, a request has been submitted to defer consideration of the item to a later date.

I should also like to inform members that on Wednesday, 20 December, in the morning, the General Assembly will take up the reports of the Second Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.